

Please rewrite claim 24 as follows:

24. (AMENDED) A method for distributing redeemable retail coupons to individuals at selected retail locations, said method including:

- creating said coupons in a digital format;
- transmitting said coupons to a network of printer appliances at said locations over a wireless network;
- receiving said transmitted coupons from said wireless network at selected appliances;
- processing and storing selected packets of information from all those received;
- converting said coupons into a printable [printed] format for distribution to said individuals;
- automatically printing said selected packets; and
- detecting the removal of a printed coupon from said appliance and thereafter automatically printing an additional coupon for distribution.

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed January 15, 2002 and the references cited therein have been carefully considered. Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 5, 21 and 24, and the application still contains claims 1-25. Inasmuch as no new claims were added, no new fee is required.

In the aforesaid Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 5-9, 21, 22 and 24 as being directly anticipated within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §102 over De Lapa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,353,218). In addition, claims 13 and 25 were rejected as being obvious within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §103 over De Lapa et al. in view of Wright (U.S. Patent No. 6,085,972).

Claims 3, 4, 11, 12, and 23 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim; however, the Examiner indicated such claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the patentable features of the present invention and now recites:

A system for distributing and printing packets of information to individuals at selected retail locations upon request by said individuals, said system including:
 means for creating said packets of information in a digital format;
 a wireless network for transmitting said packets of information to said retail locations; and
 a network of printer appliances at said locations, each of said appliances being adapted to:
 receive said transmitted packets of information from said wireless network;
 process and store selected packets of information from all those received;
 convert said selected packets of information into a printable format for distribution to said individuals;
 receive and process a request to print said packets of information by said individuals; and
 automatically print said selected packets in response to said request.

It will be appreciated that the system of claim 1, amended, offers numerous advantages over the prior art in that it provides a totally wireless system for conveying packets of information to a retail establishment where printed packets are automatically dispensed to customers upon the request of the customer without the need for intervention by an operator. The prior art relied upon by the Examiner neither teaches or suggests such a unique combination.

The patent to De Lapa et al. cited by the Examiner invention describes an apparatus and process for the precision delivery of pin-point targeted coupons to a uniquely identified shopper who has been previously tracked through historical analysis of prior purchasing behavior. It is essentially a micro-marketing system that incorporates a closed loop information gathering system that retrieves precision data on subsequent redemption. Such system generates coupons

for selected consumers from a group of consumer, regardless of whether said consumers have any interest in receiving such coupons.

As can be appreciated by claim 1, as amended, the function and purpose of the De Lapa system is entirely different from that of applicant's system. Applicants' system has as its function and purpose the distribution of large volumes of coupons having broad appeal to many shoppers upon the demand of said shoppers in an efficient, timely manner. Toward that end, applicants' system is intended to be situated in close proximity to the product so as to entice any passing shopper to purchase the product, and prints coupons on demand, without an preprinting or physical distribution of the coupons, thereby eliminating print over-runs. This controlled distribution of coupons based upon consumer demand thereby minimizes the misredemption of coupons, a problem common in preprinted, mass distribution systems.

Furthermore, the applicants' apparatus may be placed near or immediately adjacent to the product to which the coupon is directed, thereby allowing for promotion by product proximity rather than through the memory of the consumer. An additional promotional benefit of the applicants' system is that it facilitates the timing of the promotions (both initialization and termination) and allows the luxury of interim changes that are very difficult to accomplish in comparable preprinted paper promotions.

Applicants submit that claim 1, amended, now patentably distinguishes over the De Lapa et al. patent since it neither teaches nor suggests the use of a wireless network that broadly transmits packets of information to an appliance that receives and selectively processes and prints only those packets intended for such appliance upon the demand of the consumer.

Accordingly, applicants submit that claim 1, amended, patentably distinguishes over all of the references cited by the Examiner, taken alone or in combination, and is condition for immediate allowance.

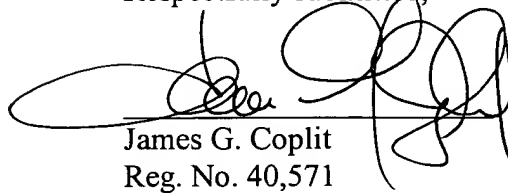
Claims 2-4 depend from and further restrict claim 1, amended, and applicants submit that these claims likewise distinguish over these references for the same reason as claim 1, amended. Independent claims 5 and 21 have been amended in the same manner as claim 1, amended, to more clearly identify the patentable features of the invention. Applicants submit that in view of these amendments, these claims and all claims that depend from and further restrict them, patentably distinguish over the references of records, whether taken alone or in combination, and are also in condition for immediate allowance.

Claim 24 has not been amended to include the same limitations as claim 1 inasmuch as such claim is a method claim based upon claim 1 and includes the limitations of claim 3, which claim was indicated by the Examiner as being allowable if rewritten. Inasmuch as claim 24 includes the limitation of the step of detecting whether a coupon has been removed and thereafter printing an additional coupon, which method is neither taught nor suggested by the references cited by the Examiner, applicants believe that claim 24 patentably distinguishes over the prior art, whether taken alone or in combination. Applicant therefor believes that claim 24, and dependent claim 25, are also in condition for immediate allowance.

In view of the foregoing, applicants submit that all claims are in condition for immediate allowance. Reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are therefore requested. In the event that the Examiner should determine that the aforesaid Amendment does not place the case in condition for immediate allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned

attorney by telephone to discuss what additional steps would be necessary to immediately place the case in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James G. Coplit', is written over a horizontal line.

James G. Coplit
Reg. No. 40,571
Attorney for Applicant
(203) 324-2828

CLEAN VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS:

1 1. A system for distributing and printing packets of information to individuals at selected
2 retail locations upon request by said individuals, said system including:

3 means for creating said packets of information in a digital format;

4 a wireless network for transmitting said packets of information to said retail locations;

5 and

6 a network of printer appliances at said locations, each of said appliances being adapted to:

7 receive said transmitted packets of information from said wireless network;

8 process and store selected packets of information from all those received;

9 convert said selected packets of information into a printable format for

10 distribution to said individuals;

11 receive and process a request to print said packets of information by said

12 individuals; and

13 automatically print said selected packets in response to said request.

1 5. A system for distributing packets of information to individuals at selected retail

2 locations upon request by said individuals, said system including:

3 means for creating said packets of information in digital format;

4 means for identifying intended recipients of said packets of information;

5 means for establishing a sequence of distribution of said packets of information;

6 a wireless network for transmitting said packets of information to said retail locations;

7 and

8 a network of printer appliances at said locations, each of said appliances being adapted to:

9 receive said transmitted packets of information from said wireless network;

10 process and store selected packets of information from all those received;

11 convert said selected packets of information into a printable format for

12 distribution to said individuals;

13 receive and process a request to print said packets of information by said

14 individuals; and

15 automatically print said selected packets in response to said request.

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1 21. A method for distributing packets of information to individuals at selected retail
2 locations upon request by said individuals, said method including the steps of:
3 creating said packets of information in a digital format;
4 transmitting said packets of information to a network of printer appliances at said
5 locations over a wireless network;
6 receiving said transmitted packets of information from said wireless network at selected
7 appliances;
8 processing and storing selected packets of information from all those received;
9 converting said selected packets of information into a printable format for distribution to
10 said individuals;
11 receiving and processing a request to print said packets of information by said
12 individuals; and
13 automatically printing said selected packets in response to said request.

1 24. A method for distributing redeemable retail coupons to individuals at selected retail
2 locations, said method including:
3 creating said coupons in a digital format;
4 transmitting said coupons to a network of printer appliances at said locations over a
5 wireless network;
6 receiving said transmitted coupons from said wireless network at selected appliances;
7 processing and storing selected packets of information from all those received;
8 converting said coupons into a printable format for distribution to said individuals;
9 automatically printing said selected packets; and
10 detecting the removal of a printed coupon from said appliance and thereafter
11 automatically printing an additional coupon for distribution.